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Contact: Rebecca Neale

(202) 494-6906

White House and California Volunteers Summit Explores Expanded Partnerships to Strengthen California Nonprofits

SACRAMENTO, CA – The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and CaliforniaVolunteers today hosted a *Partnership Summit to Strengthen Communities* in Sacramento, highlighting ways to strengthen and expand partnerships between government and California's nonprofit sector to more effectively address human need. Hosted by White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Director Jay Hein and California Secretary of Service and Volunteering Karen Baker, the Summit recognized the vital role of California faith-based and community organizations and their volunteers in tacking critical community challenges from crime and prisoner reentry to disaster recovery, HIV/AIDS and homelessness.

"The President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative is alive in California through the hundreds of nonprofits partnering with government to further their compassionate missions," said White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Director Jay Hein. "Effective and engaged volunteers are critical to the community impact of America's faith-based and community organizations. In partnership with CaliforniaVolunteers, we honor the service of volunteers and the organizations through which they serve - those first in and last out in times of need - and seek ways to further extend their efforts to target stubborn social ills."

Joined by nearly 1,000 public and private-sector leaders from across the country, the Summit highlighted ways CaliforniaVolunteers and President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative are working to strengthen the work of nonprofits through partnerships and resources to extend their reach into the communities they serve. Field experts trained these organizations to help expand their capacity in areas such as adopting effective business practices, leveraging government funds and more effectively engaging volunteers as critical resources. The Summit also featured innovative and effective models for addressing a range of social ills from substance abuse to global health and hunger.

Additionally, today's event spotlighted successful corporate strategies to more effective engage employees in skilled volunteering through our Nation's nonprofits. Representatives from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Deloitte and Intel discussed efforts to increase the amount of skilled volunteering America's corporate sector gives to nonprofits. These organizations recently partnered with the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation and the USA Freedom Corps volunteer initiative at the White House to launch the Pro Bono Challenge, a three-year campaign to leverage \$1 billion in skilled volunteering and pro bono services from the corporate community.

During the Conference, Secretary Baker announced that CaliforniaVolunteers will appoint a Federal Resources Liaison in the coming months to connect nonprofits with ways to leverage government partnerships. This liaison will work with the Faith-Based and Community Initiative to engage grassroots organizations in addressing critical needs in their communities.

CaliforniaVolunteers is the state office that manages programs and initiatives aimed at increasing the number of Californians engaged in service and volunteering and is led by the nation's first state cabinet secretary of Service and Volunteering Karen Baker.

CaliforniaVolunteers is designated as the lead agency for coordinating in-state volunteers during disasters and is developing a statewide Disaster Corps to unify affiliated volunteer programs and provide a common standard for training, certification and classification of volunteers.

CaliforniaVolunteers this year will support 52 AmeriCorps programs statewide via \$26 million in grants to nonprofits and public agencies. The agency also developed and maintains the largest statewide volunteer matching network in the nation on CaliforniaVolunteers.org, administers the Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning and guides state policy development to support the nonprofit and service fields. At today's Summit, CaliforniaVolunteers unveiled a new Web portal to connect faith-based and community organizations to current and relevant volunteer management training available both locally and online.

"California's nonprofits play a vital role in addressing our state's critical needs," remarked California's Secretary of Service and Volunteering, Karen Baker. "Today's summit will provide invaluable tools to California's faith-based and community organizations to enhance their volunteer programs and more effectively meet their missions."

Also today, Director Hein presented the lifetime President's Volunteer Service Award to Judy Levin, a Silicon Valley community volunteer who has given over 7,500 hours of service to the Volunteer Center and the Jewish Federation, as well as other charitable organizations. Levin has been active in community volunteer efforts for more than 25 years and currently serves as president of the Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley. In partnership with the Points of Light Institute and the Walt Disney Company, Levin is also the founding chair of the grassroots Green Challenge Climate Change Civic Engagement Action Program. The President's Volunteer Service Award is given to individuals who have answered President Bush's call to serve by offering either 4,000 hours or two full years of volunteering to causes greater than self.

According to figures recently released by the Corporation for National and Community Service, California's 6.7 million volunteers dedicated an average of 896.4 million hours of service per year between 2005 and 2007 – with an estimated annual economic contribution of \$17.5 billion. However, less than one in four Californians volunteer, underscoring the need to more effectively utilize this largely untapped state resource.

In 2007 alone, faith-based and community organizations in California won more than \$1 billion through 1,510 Federal competitive grants to expand their services and further their missions to help individuals in need. Launched during his early days in office, President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative is built from the conviction that the most effective way to address community challenges in California and throughout the Nation is by engaging every willing partner in a determined attack on need.

Today's *Partnership Summit to Strengthen Communities* is part of a series of regional conferences hosted by the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives across the country and around the world – and the third conference held in the state of California. The conferences are designed to connect frontline nonprofit organizations with resources and training on a variety of topics to help strengthen the services they offer and facilitate opportunities to network with community partners and government officials.

For more information on President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative, visit www.fbci.gov.

For more information on California Volunteers, visit www.californiavolunteers.org.